



HealthierUS School Challenge

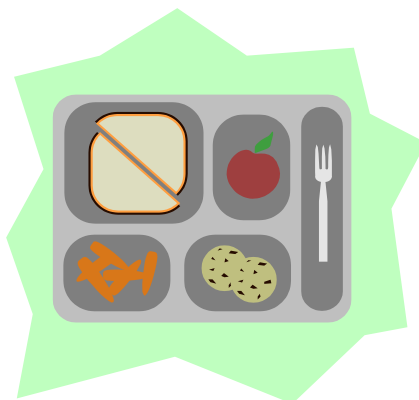
Recognizing Excellence in Nutrition and Physical Activity

Fact Sheet

Background

- The HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) was established in 2004 to recognize schools that are creating healthier school environments through their promotion of good nutrition and physical activity.
- Obesity is a growing health concern for children in the United States. The USDA believes that schools can take a leadership role in helping students learn to make healthier eating and active lifestyle choices.
- FNS encourages schools to make these changes, and with the HUSSC is acknowledging schools that improved their school environment with nutritious foods, physical activity, and nutrition education.

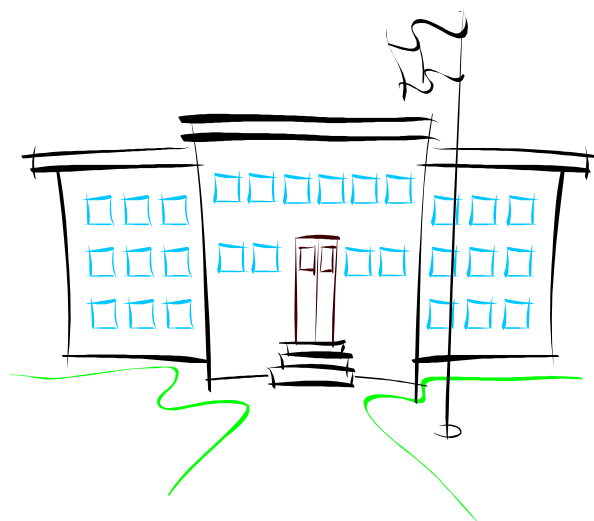
Who Should Apply



- The HUSSC is open to schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program.
- The school must also be enrolled as a Team Nutrition school, and be in compliance with all USDA nutrition standards for school meals.
- Each school must meet minimum average daily participation levels, provide nutrition education and meet the physical education and physical activity requirements.

How to Apply

- To qualify for the awards, a school must submit a formal application and meet basic criteria set forth by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).
- HealthierUS Schools must also have a local school wellness policy as mandated by Congress.
- Local school wellness policies support the HUSSC initiative and affirm that schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity.



Guiding Principles



Schools receiving a HUSSC award will commit to meeting the criteria throughout their four-year certification period.

- Schools will meet all the School Meals Initiative (SMI) requirements including energy and nutrient standards and age-appropriate portion sizes on an ongoing basis.
- Schools will serve reimbursable meals that reflect good menu planning principles, such as serving a variety of healthier foods that look good, taste good, and appeal to the cultural sensitivities of the school and the community.
- Schools will plan meals that emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products; that include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts; and that are low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.
- Schools will offer foods that ensure that students can select a meal that meets all the HUSSC criteria. Such foods should be routinely selected by students, not just token foods to meet HUSSC criteria.

Recognition/Awards

Four levels of superior performance are awarded: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Gold of Distinction.

- HUSSC schools are acknowledged by receiving a recognition plaque and award banner from USDA that showcases the school's achievement to the community.
- In addition, HUSSC schools receive national recognition by being listed on the USDA Team Nutrition website.
- Most recently, USDA announced offering incentives to schools fostering healthier school environment for our Nation's children by providing monetary awards to help participating schools improve their nutrition and physical activity environments.

- \$2,000	Gold of Distinction
- \$1,500	Gold
- \$1,000	Silver
- \$500	Bronze

